



Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: May 3, 2022

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA /
Zoom (Hybrid)

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed 11 present.

M. Chau presiding.

2. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

2.1. Communication Remote / Zoom Participation:

Meetings Will Be Held In Council Chamber With Public Welcome And By Using Remote Participation As Follows: Members Of The Public May View The Meeting Via LTC.Org (On-Line; Live Streaming; Or Local Cable Channel 99). Those Wishing To Speak Regarding A Specific Agenda Item Shall Register To Speak In Advance Of The Meeting By Sending Email To City Clerk Indicating The Agenda Item And A Phone Number To Call So That You May Be Issued Zoom Link To The Meeting. Email Address Is MGEARY@LOWELLMA.GOV. If No Access To Email You May Contact City Clerk At 978-674-4161. All Request Must Be Done Before 4:00 PM On The Day Of Meeting. For Zoom -

[HTTPS://SUPPORT.ZOOM.US/HC/EN-US/ARTICLES/201362193-JOINING-A-MEETING](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-joining-a-meeting)

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

M. Chau noted the LPD and Acting Supt. Golner for their assistance with the contingency from Greece. M. Chau introduced the winners of the Soup Competition at the Lowell WinterFest.

3. CITY CLERK

3.1. Minutes Of City Council Meeting April 26th, For Acceptance.

In City Council, minutes read, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Rourke, seconded by C. Scott. So voted.



4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1. Informational - (L) ARPA Public Listening Flyer; (M) Informational - GFOA Budget Award.

In City Council, **Motion** "To accept and place on file" by C. Leahy, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted.

4.2. Vote - Authorize City Manager Enter Into License Agreement With LaLa Books.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Noun, seconded by C. Mercier. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted.

Motion by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Nuon to suspend the rules for point of personal privilege. So voted. C. Mercier recognized the term of Interim City Manager Michael Geary and thanked him for his service. C. Mercier requested that copies of agendas be available in the Chamber for the public.

4.3. Claims - (2) Property Damage.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Law Department for report and recommendation by C. Robinson, seconded by C. Yem. So voted.

Motion to bundle Item #4.4 and #4.24 by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted.

4.4. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Repair The Brick Sidewalk Outside Tre-Monte On The Palmer Street Side For The Outside Seating Area.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier noted it was a safety hazard for employees so repair should be done promptly.

4.5. C. Gitschier/C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Set Up A Tour Of LeLacheur Park And The National Park For The City Council.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted.

Motion to bundle Item #4.6 to #4.10, inclusive, by C. Robinson, seconded C. Scott. So voted.

4.6. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Install A Stop Sign At The Intersection Of Christian Avenue And Methuen Street.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted.



4.7. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Look At Installing A 4-Way Stop At Read Street And 5th Street Intersection.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted.

4.8. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Look Into Changing Traffic Pattern For Side Streets Off Of Bridge Street From 2-Way To 1-Way.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson commented on the traffic concern in the area.

4.9. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Look Into Installation Of Additional Lighting Along 1st Street.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted items were identified after the neighborhood clean-up and that lighting in the area needs to be improved.

4.10. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Provide A Plan To Remove "Widow Makers", Dead Wood Along 1st Street.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the effect of storm damage which can cause injuries.

4.11. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Provide A Report On What Services Our Animal Control Department Provide; Including, How Stray Animals Are Handled And If The Department Head Feels As If They Are Adequately Staffed.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted the need for information regarding the process.

4.12. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Install A Stop Sign At The Intersection Of Columbia And Wright Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted.

4.13. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have The Proper Department Investigate The Possibility Of Renovating The Lowell District Court For The Lowell Police Department.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted that costs should be evaluated and funding obtained if project is able to move forward as the LPD is in dire need for a new facility. C. Leahy noted all possibilities should be explored regarding the site.



4.14. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Provide An Update Regarding The Hiring Of Traffic Engineer.

In City Council, seconded by C. Gitschier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted motions that are adding up as a result of the empty position. C. Gitschier commented that an internship with UML would be helpful to the position. C. Rourke commented on the position and the salary. Manager Golden, Jr. commented on the discussions regarding the salary range. **Motion** by C. Gitschier, seconded by C. Robinson to request City Manager look into possible internship through UML regarding Transportation Engineer position. So voted. C. Robinson noted there must be clarity regarding if position is union or not.

4.15. C. Rourke/C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have The DPD Present The Council With An RFP For The Lease And/Or Sale Of LeLacheur Park

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Rourke noted there must be direction with the City and see what the value of asset is and that facility is in need of repairs. C. Rourke noted the direction must be in the best interest of the taxpayers and that executive session discussion will be needed. C. Scott noted that there must be options available. C. Gitschier commented on partnership with UML in the past and would be best path for this project so they should be involved with discussions. C. Gitschier noted prior agreements surrounding the facility. A friendly amendment was added to motion without objection from makers of the motion to have executive session to discuss this motion and have a UML representative present via phone should their involvement be needed. C. Mercier noted the need to have executive session to begin discussing options but that the body should tour the facility before such discussions. C. Robinson noted executive session was needed to gather information. C. Drinkwater noted body was on same page and that executive session is needed to discuss all parameters and that he was encouraged by current discussions. C. Nuon noted Council must act and that UML has been a good partner and that there are restrictions on site which must be addressed moving forward. C. Scott commented on email of Solicitor regarding restrictions and requested information. Solicitor O'Connor noted there are some questions regarding the agreements and statutes and that full discussion would be made in the executive session. C. Gitschier commented on current lease and if terms are being utilized regarding use of the facility. Solicitor O'Connor noted that there have been scheduling of local use for the park. C. Gitschier noted field should be available for local use and that UML would be best partner for the process and any transfer should dissolve any debt on the facility. C. Rourke noted all would be in favor of local children using the field. M. Chau noted it was a good idea to tour facility before discussions and to have Manager discuss matter with UML. C. Drinkwater noted best approach is to have UML available for discussion. C. Yem noted need to discuss in executive session.

Motion by C. Nuon, seconded by C. Robinson to take Item #8.5 out of order. So voted.

4.16. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Appropriate Department Provide A Report About The Parking Placard Policy For Residents' Homes; The Report Should



Include What Is Needed To Apply For One, Where They Are Allowed In The City, Instructions For Their Placement And How They Are Enforced.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted a lot of resident concern and questions about the policy. C. Leahy noted that policy should be reviewed to ensure proper compliance and use. C. Rourke noted that Parking Department handles these request and process is simple.

4.17. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Appropriate Department Report On Pedestrian And Traffic Improvements To Be Implemented In Conjunction With The Pending Opening Of The New Home Depot Distribution Center On Woburn Street In Tewksbury.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott commented on her attendance at the Tewksbury Planning Board meeting which placed responsibilities on the developer and wants to ensure that they were being adhered to. C. Yem questioned who would hold financial responsibility for any modifications. C. Scott noted that developer had to put up money for those changes.

4.18. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Develop A Plan To Post Dates And Approximate Times On The City Website Of Any Blasting Activities That Will Happen Within Any Neighborhoods.

In City Council, seconded by C. Gitschier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted that residents must be kept informed during the whole process as it is disruptive. C. Yem noted it should be developer's responsibility to inform neighborhood.

4.19. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Look Into Installing A Stop Sign At The Exit From The VA Clinic At The Corner Of Cunningham And Marshall Roads.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted.

4.20. C. Scott - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Remove The Small Pedestrian Bridge On The Pond On Park Avenue Near The Pyne Arts School.

In City Council, seconded by C. Jenness, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Scott noted resident concern for possible abuse of animals in the area. C. Robinson noted that trimming front of pond would be helpful to maintaining area. **Motion** to refer to Environmental and Flood Issues SC by C. Scott, seconded by C. Robinson. So voted.

4.21. C. Scott/C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Report On The Feasibility Of Developing And RFI For A Municipal Marketing Program; The RFI Should Include The Goal Of Identifying City Owned Assets Available For Sponsorship And Advertising To Bring In New City Revenues Using A Private/Public Partnership Model.



In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted other communities do well with this program. C. Scott noted it was a good revenue source for City as proven by other communities. C. Rourke noted simple to implement and should be done.

4.22. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Have Police Patrol The Area Surrounding Gorham, Central And Charles Streets; Especially In The Area Of Jerry's Food Store And The Portuguese American Monument.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier commented the number of times City has assisted in that area and issues always reappear. C. Mercier noted recent efforts of Acting City Manager Geary, LPD and the LFD in addressing issues but they must continue to keep pressure to fully resolve. C. Mercier note lack of respect for the neighborhood is unacceptable and that patrols can be increased from funding from marijuana tax can assist with that. C. Jenness noted reoccurring issues and that Neighborhoods SC has referral regarding quality of life in this neighborhood. C. Nuon commented on the safety concerns coming from the Back Central Neighborhood Meeting and that area needs more than a Band-Aid. C. Robinson suggested that Housing Authority across the street could be of some assistance. C. Scott noted Back Central Neighborhood had many valid concerns. M. Chau needs more attention in the area. **Motion** by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Robinson to refer to Neighborhoods SC. So voted.

4.23. C. Leahy - Req. City Mgr. Report On Status Of Filling Potholes Around The City Of Lowell.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy noted problem never ends and requested status as they should be close to completion. C. Gitschier noted preventive maintenance could resolve a lot of issues moving forward. C. Scott questioned type of reports that can be generated from the reporting system.

4.24. C. Leahy/C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Have DPW Look Into Sidewalk Condition On Palmer Street, In Front Of Tre-Monte Restaurant, And Come Back With Plan To Fix And Repair The Sidewalk.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy commented must see what the needs are and look for a permanent solution.

4.25. C. Leahy/M. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Work With Proper Department For Major Clean-Up Throughout The City.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Leahy noted the efforts of the Lowell Litter Crew and that more resources should be aimed at clean-up and also there should be an anti-litter campaign started by the City. C. Robinson noted City should make available tools to assist with volunteers with cleaning up. C. Yem noted complaints regarding trash after Tsongas Arena events. **Motion** by



C. Robinson, seconded by C. Rourke to have canals cleaned. So voted. C. Mercier noted Ennell may own the canals and that they are not a good partner. C. Jenness noted volunteer group, Lowell Canal Cleaners that should be involved in discussion.

5. VOTES FROM THE CITY MANAGER

5.1. Vote - Transfer \$10,000 – Cemetery.

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Drinkwater, seconded by C. Jenness. Adopted per Roll Call vote 10 yeas, 1 absent (C. Leahy). So voted.

5.2. Vote - Transfer \$30,000 - DPW

In City Council, Read twice, full reading waived with no objections. **Motion** to adopt by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Yem. Adopted per Roll Call vote 11 yeas. So voted. C. Robinson noted transfer will assist with trash pick-up and there should be proper scheduling as well to improve routine. C. Gitschier questioned line item in budget transfer and what happens with the surplus. Conor Baldwin (CFO) noted any surplus would go to free cash the following year. C. Jenness questioned the arrival of the new garbage truck. Mr. Baldwin noted the delivery is imminent. C. Robinson noted that there must be staff to run the truck. Mr. Baldwin indicated staff is budgeted for next fiscal year.

6. REPORTS (SUB/COMMITTEE, IF ANY)

6.1. Finance SC Joint With School Finance SC May 3, 2022.

In City Council, C. Scott requested to provide report at following meeting on May 10th. C. Rourke noted that a Transportation SC will be scheduled for May 10th.

7. PETITIONS

7.1. Misc. - Charles Kafasis Request Installation Of A Handicap Parking Sign In Front Of 141 Mount Vernon Street.

In City Council, **Motion** to refer to Transportation Engineer for report and recommendation by C. Mercier, seconded by C. Jenness. So voted.

8. CITY COUNCIL - MOTIONS

8.1. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Have Human Resources Provide All New Employees With Entire W-4 Forms And An Explanation Of The Tax Deduction Process At Time Of Hire.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier commented on changes which need to be conveyed to new employees.

8.2. C. Gitschier - Req. City Mgr. Update The Council On The Crosswalk Painting Throughout The City For Public Safety.



In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Gitschier commented on prior motion and just wanted status update. Manager Golden, Jr. noted there was working being done in-house at the same time they are formulating and RFP. C. Yem noted that there should be stop painted on streets at these intersections.

Motion by C. Yem, seconded by C. Leahy to bundle Items #8.3 and #8.4. So voted.

8.3. C. Yem - Req. City Mgr. Have Representative From National Grid Provide An Update To The Council Regarding Their Plan To Erect A Permanent Fence At The National Grid Site At The Corner Of School And Rock Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Yem noted it was a public safety issue.

8.4. C. Yem/C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Direct Proper Department Raise The "Entering & Exiting" Sign On School Street Bridge For The Safety Of Children Walking To And From The Stoklosa Middle School.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted signage needs improvement. C. Robinson noted ramps were not ADA compliant.

8.5. C. Nuon/C. Yem - Req. City Council Recognize April 17th As Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speakers, Domenik Lay, Sothea Chiemroum and Dr. Boravann Ung, addressed the Council. C. Nuon commented on the day noting the survivors as well as providing history of the genocide. C. Yem noted many lost family members not just from Lowell but from all over the world. M. Chau commented on the remembrance.

Motion by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Gitschier to take Item #8.13 out of order. So voted.

8.6. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Have DPD Work With The CMAA And Cambodian Town Committee To Install Flags On The Utility Poles Along Middlesex Street.

In City Council, seconded by C. Mercier, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon commented on partnerships and that will make project be successful. C. Yem noted the efforts of the Cambodian Town Committee and requested prior signage be restored to the area as it has become a tourist attraction.

8.7. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. List All Qualifications For All Department Heads On The City Website.

In City Council, seconded by C. Drinkwater, referred to City Manager. So voted.



8.8. C. Nuon - Req. City Mgr. Work With Proper Department To Come Up With A Plan For Bulky Item Disposal That Will Mitigate The Illegal Dumping That Continues Throughout The City.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Nuon noted the ongoing issue that needs to be addressed. C. Scott noted prior motions and commented that all options should be reviewed in terms of costs in a new contract.

8.9. C. Nuon/C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. Work With HR Department And City Solicitor To Provide The Following Information To The City Council: The Most Recently Completed Wage And Classification Study; The Salary Grid Establishing Tiers And Steps For Employees Not Covered By Collective Bargaining Agreements; And Any Movement Of Positions Within Salary Tiers That Occurred Within The Last Ten Fiscal Years.

In City Council, no second needed, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Drinkwater noted it was an information request commenting that a new study was needed as old one is outdated. C. Drinkwater recognized the discretion Manager has and that this could offer guidance down the road. C. Noun noted the goal is to attract and retain employees in the City.

8.10. C. Drinkwater - Req. City Mgr. Direct The DPW To Coordinate With Youth Sports Leagues To Adjust Trash Pick-Up Schedules At City Parks To Account For Increased Usage Of Fields During Spring And Summer Sessions.

In City Council, seconded by C. Robinson, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Drinkwater commented that prior transfer would assist with this request as the parks will be greatly populated. C. Robinson noted the assistance of volunteers and that a permanent process should be put in place.

8.11. C. Robinson - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Provide A Report On How To Speed Up Process In Dealing With Abandoned/Vacant Lots; Ie. Union Street, 33 Hildreth Street, Royal Street And Any Other Throughout The City.

In City Council, seconded by C. Rourke, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Robinson noted ongoing issue which needs speedy attention and recognized the work of the DPW. Solicitor O'Connor outlined legal possibilities for these types of properties. C. Robinson noted some areas have been transformed into community gardens. C. Mercier noted there should be beneficial use of these properties.

8.12. C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Have Parking Director Find Ways And Means To Change Two Paying Parking Meters In Front Of 13 Hurd Street (The Open Pantry) To Two Free 15 Minute Parking Meters For Clients Picking Up Food.

In City Council, seconded by C. Yem, referred to City Manager. So voted. C. Mercier commented on the organization that assists the needy.



8.13. C. Jenness - Req. City Mgr. Evaluate The Feasibility Of Creating A Centralized Communications Department To Improve Information Flow.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. Registered speaker, Bobby Tugbiyele, addressed the Council via Zoom. C. Jenness noted effort to involve all of government in a centralized effort to inform public of all available resources. C. Yem noted transfer of information is vital.

8.14. M. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Explore Installing A 4-Way Stop Sign At The Corner Of High And East Merrimack Streets.

In City Council, seconded by C. Nuon, referred to City Manager. So voted. M. Chau commented on the danger in the area.

8.15. M. Chau - Req. City Mgr. Have Proper Department Place Highland Avenue And Powell Street On The Paving List.

In City Council, seconded by C. Leahy, referred to City Manager. So voted. M. Chau noted locations of the streets. C. Gitschier noted Highland Avenue may already be on list.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In City Council, C. Gitschier remembered fallen Lowell Police Officer, John Winn. C. Robinson commented on need to victims of the Fulton Street fire. C. Yem recognized the budget award to Mr. Baldwin and his staff. C. Yem wished C. Nuon a happy birthday. M. Chau noted Asian Caucus unity event.

10. ADJOURNMENT

In City Council, **Motion** to Adjourn by C. Jenness, seconded by C. Leahy. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk